

Press release: New powers to crack down on waste crime

- Environment Agency given new powers to tackle the problem of illegal waste sites.
- Powers include ability to lock up sites and force rogue operators to clean up all waste
- Body worn video cameras will be rolled out to all waste enforcement officers

New powers to tackle waste crime come into force today as the Environment Agency is given the authority to lock up illegal waste sites and block access in order to prevent tonnes of waste piling up and posing a risk to the environment.

The Environment Agency has also been granted the power to require rogue operators to clear all the waste at a problem waste site, not just the illegal waste. The changes are in response to a public consultation where 90% of respondents supported proposals for the regulator to take physical steps to curb illegal waste activity.

As the fight against waste crime ramps up, the Environment Agency has also announced that its waste enforcement officers will be equipped with body worn video cameras on their visits to waste sites. The move follows a growing number of abusive incidents during site inspections.

The measures follow an extra £30 million of funding from the Government in November 2017 to tackle waste crime – an issue that drives business away from legitimate operators, blights communities and endangers the environment.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

These new powers will give the Environment Agency the tools they need to curb the rise of waste sites that continue to break the law and blight our communities.

Through our 25 year Environment plan we want to be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we inherited it. As part of that commitment I am determined to crack down on these criminals and these new powers will be crucial in ending this criminal activity once and for all, backed up by £30 million of new money.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

These are tough new sanctions against waste criminals and their unscrupulous activity which not only drains the economy but causes

harm to the environment and damages livelihoods across the country. Last year, we closed down more than two illegal waste sites a day, and we're determined to keep going.

As we step up our fight against waste criminals, we also have a duty to protect our officers who put themselves in potentially hostile situations when they visit sites for inspections or to serve notices. The introduction of the bodycams provides an added deterrent as our officers do the important job of fighting waste crime.

The use of body cameras was first trialled by the Environment Agency in the north east. Footage captured on a bodycam was recently used to bring a conviction against an offender for the first time. The defendant was found guilty of wilfully obstructing the officers in the execution of their duty and using abusive behaviour towards two officers.

Paul Whitehill, Environment Agency waste officer said:

As a former police officer, I've seen routine visits rapidly escalate into threatening, or sometimes even violent, situations. Sadly the same risks apply to the Environment Agency's officers.

We want to get on with our jobs without the threat of violence and the cameras will help to protect staff and bring obstructive individuals to justice.

In the financial year 16/17, the Environment Agency brought 138 prosecutions against businesses or individuals for waste crime offences, yielding more than £2m in fines.

For more information on the trial of the body video cameras, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-trials-use-of-body-cameras>

For more information on the successful prosecution using body worn cameras, see our press release [here](#).

The responses to the 2015 public consultation on increasing EA powers are also available [online](#).

[Press release: Easter crackdown on](#)

illegal fishing

They'll be out in force patrolling waters throughout the North East to make sure anglers are fishing in the right place, with the right tackle and equipment, and with a valid licence.

Easter and the upcoming Bank Holiday weekends are always popular for angling, and despite the unsettled weather forecast, there's no better time to get outdoors and enjoy some of the great fishing spots in the North East.

The Easter enforcement activity will be supported by the Angling Trust's Operation Clampdown – the annual blitz on illegal coarse fishing during the close season, which runs from 15 March to 15 June inclusive.

There are currently 464 Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiffs in England who are taking part in Operation Clampdown by keeping watch on their local rivers and reporting suspicious activity to the Environment Agency and police. There are 79 Voluntary Bailiffs in the North East and Yorkshire area.

Targeting known hotspots

Kevin Summerson, Fisheries Enforcement Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency, said:

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round. Our job is to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries, and anglers who fish legally rightly demand we take action to catch those who flout the law.

Our enforcement officers, working together with the police and supported by Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiffs, will be targeting illegal fishing this Easter weekend and anyone caught can expect to face prosecution.

Our work is intelligence-led, meaning we target known hotspots and act on reports of illegal fishing.

Looking for those flouting the law

During January alone the Environment Agency prosecuted 14 men in the North East for fishing without a rod licence, resulting in fines amounting to £3,749 and costs totalling £1,784. Kevin added:

This demonstrates just how seriously we take these offences. Whether it's fishing for coarse fish during close season, using illegal nets and other equipment, or fishing without a licence, our officers will be looking for those flouting the law. We urge people to help us protect the health of our fisheries by reporting

suspected illegal fishing to us.

Anglers are reminded it is currently the close season for coarse fishing. This means fishing for coarse fish on rivers and streams is not permitted. This is done to help protect breeding fish, helping to safeguard stocks for the future. However, there are still plenty of places anglers can wet a line for coarse fish, including most stillwaters and canals.

You can check local fishing byelaws on [the gov.uk website](#)

People are urged to report illegal fishing to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 807060, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

The rod licence is great value for money – a full annual licence costs just £30 with some short term and concessionary licences also available. [Buy your rod licence online.](#)

Notice: WR15 8PX, Colin Phillips (Farms) Limited: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit, decision document for:

- Operator name: Colin Phillips (Farms) Limited
- Installation name: Sallings Farm
- Permit number: EPR/TP3337NC/A001

Notice: HU8 8DL, Cargill plc: environmental permit issued

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Cargill plc
 - Installation name: Cargill plc
 - Permit number: EPR/ZP3931YU/A001
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Press release: Hefty fines for unlicensed anglers

Two men have been handed hefty court fines for fishing illegally in separate offences at Manor Farm Lakes Northill, Bedford.

They were caught in May last year fishing without a rod licence during targeted patrols by Environment Agency fisheries enforcement officers.

Jay John Whitbread, 22, of Church Lane, Bedford, was caught fishing without a licence at the same location on 2 separate occasions and both cases were heard together at court. He was fined £657, and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £30 and £127 costs. A total of £814.

Liam Knight, 27, of Westmill Lane, Hitchin, was also caught fishing without a licence. He was fined £293, and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £30 and £127 costs. A total of £450.

The defendants both pleaded guilty to Luton Magistrates Court on 6 March 2018.

After the hearing Environment Agency officer Kye Jerrom said:

It's a crime to fish without a valid licence and offenders could be fined up to £2,500, have their fishing equipment seized and be banned from fishing. Our enforcement officers inspect rod licences throughout East Anglia and could turn up at any time.

All income from rod licence sales is invested directly back into maintaining and improving fisheries. Those who fish without a rod licence are having a direct effect on that work and are selling other anglers short. At £30 for a 2 rod coarse and non-migratory trout license, or £82 to also fish for salmon and sea trout, and short term options available too, the rod licence is great value for money".

Anglers are being reminded that fishing for coarse fish in rivers is off limits until 16 June and anyone caught can expect to be prosecuted and face a fine. The 3-month break began 15 March and ends 15 June.

Close Season

The close season on rivers is important to maintain healthy fish stocks, as it allows fish time to breed as well as giving other waterside wildlife the same break. During this time fisheries enforcement officers will be carrying out regular patrols of rivers with partners under OPERATION CLAMPDOWN.

OPERATION CLAMPDOWN is a joint Environment Agency, Police and Angling Trust – Voluntary Bailiff Service enforcement strategy run throughout the closed season. It ensures reactive and planned enforcement activity prevents illegal fishing on lakes, rivers, ponds and canals where coarse fishing is allowed. Officers will be ensuring all anglers have a valid rod licence, and they will also be on the look-out for those using illegal baits, banned methods of fishing and fishing in prohibited areas.

Buying a rod licence is quick and easy – either online at www.gov.uk – the only site you need, or from the Post Office.

The Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal fishing by calling 0800 80 70 60.